

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

June 19, 2002

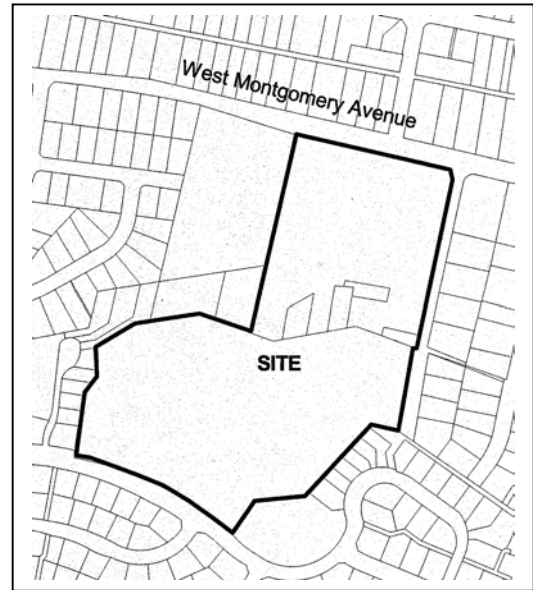
SUBJECT: Use Permit Application USE2002-00646

Applicant: Washington Waldorf School
4800 Sangamore Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

Owner: Washington Waldorf School

Date Filed: June 14, 2002

Location: 500 West Montgomery Avenue



REQUEST:

- The applicant requests approval to utilize a portion of the existing facilities on the former Chestnut Lodge property for a greenhouse, gardening and related activities.

PREVIOUS RELATED ACTIONS:

- Special Exception S-184-72, approved by the Board of Appeals February 3, 1973
- Use Permit U-630-73, approved by the Planning Commission September 19, 1973

RELEVANT ISSUES

In reviewing the application, the following issues emerged and have been addressed:

- The proposed application is a request to occupy a portion of the site as a preliminary use, pending completion of a final plan for the entire property and submittal of a special exception application.
- The applicant has indicated a desire to utilize the cafeteria room periodically for school-related meetings. This will require additional parking beyond that required for daily use. There is existing parking sufficient to accommodate this occasional use.

ANALYSIS

Background

The Washington Waldorf School has acquired the property of the former Chestnut Lodge psychiatric treatment facility. The ultimate intent is to have this property become a private educational institution. However, the school is still developing a full plan for the entire site to be submitted as a special exception application. In the meantime, they must have some approved use and occupancy

of the site under their non-profit status by July 1, 2002, or face a substantial property tax bill. Thus the reason for this application for an interim use.

Property Description and Proposal

The property consists of 20.4 acres, with frontage on West Montgomery Avenue. The original Chestnut Lodge building occupies the area facing West Montgomery Avenue. Additional buildings for residential care and treatment have been added over the years to the south. These include 4 residence buildings and a cafeteria building, as well as a greenhouse, and swimming pool with associated gym/bathhouse. Much of the area facing West Montgomery Avenue has substantial tree coverage. The area around the location of the subject permit application has some scattered trees, along with driveways and parking lots associated with the previous use.

The applicant wishes to utilize the existing greenhouse for growing herbs, plants, and flowers. A portion of the existing cafeteria building will be used to house gardening supplies and for the potting and preparation of the plants. A small office will also be located in the cafeteria building along with rest room facilities. The greenhouse has a floor area of 1,500 square feet. The total square footage of the cafeteria building is 10,055 square feet. The applicant proposes to block off the kitchen area of this building, leaving a useable floor area of approximately 4,700 square feet. There will be no changes to the exterior of either structure. The applicant may also use approximately 200 square feet of the lawn area between the two buildings for an outdoor garden plot.

The site is in the R-S Zone. Gardening, including the sale of produce, is a permitted use in the R-S Zone. The applicant states that the maximum number of people on the site at any one time would be 10. The code requires parking at a rate of 1 space for each 2 persons on the site, or 5 spaces. Discussions with the applicant subsequent to the submittal of the application indicate a desire to use the cafeteria room on an occasional basis for meetings. The rated capacity of the room is 99 persons. The code would consider this an auditorium for parking purposes. The parking requirement for an auditorium is 1 space for each 4 seats, or 25 spaces. There is an existing 48 space parking area immediately adjacent to the cafeteria building. Thus the parking available is sufficient to accommodate this occasional use.

At such time as the applicant has developed a final plan for the use of the entire site, they will submit an application for a special exception. At that time, a more complete evaluation of the entire site and how it relates to the surrounding neighborhood will be done. This minor use, involving use of existing structures and facilities, is expected to have no impact on the surrounding neighborhood or on the historic portions of the site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval is recommended, subject to the following conditions:

1. Submission, for approval by the Chief of Planning, of eleven (11) copies of the site plan, revised according to Planning Commission Exhibit A.
2. The applicant is bound by all statements submitted on the site plan and use permit application.

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Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Aerial Photo
3. Use Permit Application